

REMARKS

Independent claims 1, 7, 15, 26 and 27 have been amended. Claims 1-33 are pending in this application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The Examiner stated that the term "the process model" in claim 1 is a relative term that renders the claim indefinite. Accordingly, claim 1 has been amended to delete the term "the process model" and instead use the term "the process definition," which has clear antecedent bases in claim 1.

Claim 26 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Flores. Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guheen and further in view of Flores. Claims 15-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Flores and further in view of Johnson. Claims 27-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Flores and further in view of Guheen.

These rejections are respectfully traversed with respect to claims 1-33, as amended.

The present invention, as defined by the amended claims, allows a single software application to both graphically define and directly implement business processes from the top-down, enabling a single software application to coordinate the processes of an entire business. The process definition, as stated in amended claim 1, includes a level of detail enabling immediate and automatic execution of the business processes by a computer system.

The concept of defining business processes from the top down is not new. Known graphical software tools allow business analysts to create detailed top-down business process models.

However, problems occur when one attempts to implement these business process models. First, the business analyst who created the model is typically not able to create the software required to implement the model. Instead, the business analyst must rely on a software developer to create the software. The business analyst must explain the business model to the

software developer, who must then attempt to implement the business model to the best of their understanding. The resulting software implementation rarely matches the business process visualized by the business analyst.

Moreover, multiple computer resources must be coordinated to implement even a single business process. In a large business, numerous incompatible computing platforms, operating systems, networking protocols, databases and custom applications coexist. These various environments must be integrated in order to implement a new business process. Consequently, implementing a newly designed, top-down business process tends to be expensive, time-consuming and difficult.

The present invention enables a business analyst to both graphically define and directly implement a top-down business process model, without requiring an intervening software writing step. In a fundamental distinction to the prior art, the definition of the business model, graphically created by a business analyst and not a software developer, results directly in executable software. This enables direct implementation of the graphically defined business model, and enables the newly defined business model to be integrated with existing enterprise applications. The graphically defined business model is a fully useable enterprise application that can be directly implemented in real-time without interrupting business operations.

All of the claims have been amended to reflect this distinction. For example, claim 1 as amended is directed to a method for graphically defining business processes and also directly implementing the graphically defined business processes. Claims 2-33 have been similarly amended.

A similar combination of elements is neither disclosed nor suggested in any of the cited references. None of the cited references disclose or suggest a method for both graphically defining business processes and for also directly implementing the graphically defined business processes. At most, the cited references disclose examples of known graphical software tools that allow business analysts to create detailed top-down business process models. However, there is no teaching or suggestion in any of the cited references of enabling a business analyst to both graphically define and directly implement a top-down business process model, without requiring an intervening software writing step (as in the present invention).

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 527922000100.

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